

Storm Country Polly

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"SWEETHEART!"

SYNOPSIS. Occupying a dilapidated shack in the Silent City, a squatter settlement near Ithaca, New York, Polly Hopkins lives with her father, small Jerry, and an old woman, Granny Hope. On an adjacent farm, Oscar Bennett, prosperous farmer, is a neighbor. He is secretly married to Evelyn Robertson, supposedly wealthy girl of the neighborhood, Marcus MacKenzie, who owns the ground the squatters occupy, is their determined enemy. Polly overhears a conversation between MacKenzie and a stranger, in which the former avows his intention of driving the squatters from his land. The stranger sympathizes with the squatters, and earns Polly's gratitude. Evelyn Robertson discovers from her mother that they are not rich, but practically living on the bounty of Robert Percival, Evelyn's cousin. Polly learns from Evelyn that the sympathetic stranger is Robert Percival. Evelyn charges Polly with a message to Bennett, telling him she can give him no more money. She already bitterly regrets her marriage to the ignorant farmer. Polly conveys her message and Oscar makes threats. He insists Evelyn meet him that night. Polly has her father and Larry Bishop, a squatter, take an oath to do MacKenzie no injury. Evelyn unsuccessfully tries to get money from her mother with which to buy off Bennett and induce him to leave the country, giving her her freedom. She and MacKenzie avow their love. At the arranged meeting that night, Bennett threatens Evelyn with exposure unless she gives him money. Polly meets Robert Percival, and they are mutually attracted. Polly's feeling being adoration. Oscar kills Polly's lamb and Percival threatens Oscar. MacKenzie orders the squatters to leave. Evelyn plans to marry MacKenzie. Percival and Polly confer. Evelyn, MacKenzie's man, arrests Polly's father on a framed-up charge.

CHAPTER X—Continued.

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"You do something, ma'am!" she implored. "Please do it quick, an' an'—!" A light leapt into her eyes and she burst out: "Mebbe some day you'll be askin' me a big favor, an' here's my word before God, I do it."

For a short space of time the two girls stared into each other's eyes, but Evelyn's fell first. She sank back faintly.

"Take her away, Robert!" she groaned. "It's too dreadful."

After Polly and Robert had gone, she turned swiftly on Marcus.

"I wish they were all dead, those wretched squatters," she said fretfully, and frowning, MacKenzie continued his breakfast in silence.

Miserable days passed for the entire squatter settlement. That the right arm of the Silent City had been lopped off when Hopkins was imprisoned showed plainly to the abjection of its inhabitants. Every countenance was wrinkled with anxiety; and still the strange men hovered about the takehide.

Ugly rumors circulated through the Silent City. It was said that to fix a felony on Hopkins, the officers claimed that in searching him, before shutting him up, they had found a revolver in his pocket. Every one that knew him scouted the idea, but Jeremiah Hopkins was promptly indicted for carrying concealed weapons.

The only concession Robert had been able to obtain was permission for Polly to visit her father, and day after day she carried Jerry to see him.

The day of Hopkins' trial Polly had to stay at home to care for Granny Hope and the baby.

Late in the afternoon, while she was rocking Wee Jerry, for there was no other way to keep him quiet, there came a rap on the door. Placing him on the cot, she called a soft: "Come in."

The entrance of Robert Percival filled her with apprehension, he looked so serious, so drawn and pale.

"It's about daddy," she exclaimed, forgetting for the moment how embarrassed she was.

Robert nodded.

"Sit down, Polly," he said gravely, "and I'll tell you."

Mute as she stood staring at him.

"Sit down, dear," he insisted.

"I don't want to sit down," she moaned. "Tell me about daddy. What's happened?—He's goin' to Auburn, huh?"

Had he been able, Robert would have contradicted her. Gladly would he have chased away the welting tears that came slowly into the dear eyes.

"Is it Auburn prison?" she whispered. "Did the jury say he was guilty?"

"Yes, Polly, but I've still hopes I can get him another trial," answered Robert. "Oh, little Polly, please don't cry, please don't."

Unwillingly that he was holding out his hands to her, she sobbed hysterically, utterly deprived of self-control. The young Robert pleaded with her to



"Haden't You Best Go Now?" She Asked.

crude squatter, malle that made his heart beat so?

"Polly," he murmured, drawing her to him. "Little Polly," and then he raised her face to his—"Kiss me, sweet."

Limp and trembling, she leaned against him as she had that day in his own home. She was so tired and lonely.

"I want you always, Polly," he whispered in her ear. "Some day I want you for my wife. I'll take you away from Ithaca—all of you, your father and the baby, and you'll be with me."

Hope too. You hear, don't you, Pollyop?"

At that Polly clung to him. She had lost sight of the fact that she might have to marry Oscar Bennett to free Daddy Hopkins, and to keep her people in the Silent City. She only realized that she was in Robert's arms, and that he was telling her over and over and over that he adored her.

"Haden't you best go now?" she asked. "Some one might catch you here. No! Please, please don't kiss me no more."

Without the slightest regard for her protestations, Robert, smiling, gathered her completely into his arms.

"Perhaps," he stammered, "perhaps, sweetheart, your father'll come back in spite of Marcus MacKenzie. Good-bye, dear."

She followed him to the door and watched him go up the lane. Then she crept back into the shanty.

"Daddy," she cried, "I'm tryin' my best to save you, dear, an' an' I will, I will, darlin'. Your brat'll save you, Daddy—but oh, God, it seems as how I couldn't do it."

CHAPTER XI.

Over a week had passed since Hopkins had stood before his peers to be judged of a crime the law would not overlook. His lawyer, a good one and well paid by Robert Percival, had fought strenuously for a new trial; but after much deliberation on the part of the judge, the motion had been denied; and this was the last day of Jeremiah's stay in the county jail.

It was soon after luncheon time that a high-powered motorcar was carrying Evelyn Robertson and Marcus MacKenzie to the Bennett farmhouse. The purchasing of the farm had been settled, as far as Marcus was concerned, although Eve's pleading and Oscar's stubbornness had made him offer more for the place than it was really worth.

When the farmer walked up to the automobile, as it stopped before his door, Oscar paid no attention to Evelyn, sitting beside MacKenzie, save to give her an awkward bow.

"You've spoken to this squatter girl about what you want, Bennett?" asked Marcus, going to the point at once.

"Yes, sure I have," growled Oscar. "I told you that 'other day; but Polly seems to be always holding off for something. If she toes the mark, then I'll sell my farm and take her West. I won't have that brat of a Jerry, though, but I suppose Polly'll make a row when I tell her that."

"You won't be worried with the boy, Bennett. I'm going to have the Children's society take him. Hopkins will serve a long term, and if you marry Polly, the rest of the pests will scatter after a while. I'll be glad to be rid of the whole Hopkins tribe. But that girl is like a burr; she sticks tighter, the more you pull!"

"That's the bargain, Mr. MacKenzie. I sell the farm at the price we talked if I get Polly Hopkins. If I don't get her, then I won't sell. I can make a good living here for me and my mother, and I don't intend to leave this country without Pollyop."

The thought of his staying around Ithaca filled Evelyn with dread. She knew something of the tenacity with which he clung to any notion that might take possession of him. How could she have ever submitted to his caresses? And the words, "Until death do us part," rang in her ears, filling her with nauseating disgust.

"I wish he were dead this minute," she thought passionately.

She was waiting for Oscar to continue, but he evidently did not intend to; so, settling back as if anxious to start, she said coldly:

"I'll go to her then, as soon as I can."

"When—today, ma'am?" asked Oscar eagerly.

If she had to approach Polly Hopkins about this disagreeable matter, the sooner the better, Evelyn thought. "Yes," she consented languidly. "I might go now, I suppose."

"But you won't find her home till night, Eve," Marcus informed her. "She's gone to see her father before he goes to Auburn. I tried to put the quietus on that, but Bob cut up so I told the sheriff to let her in."

"Then I'll telephone you later, Mr. Bennett," said Evelyn, lifting her chin laughingly as if he were really beneath her consideration. "Good afternoon!"

The hours passed slowly by! It seemed an eternity to Oscar while he waited the call from Evelyn. When he heard her voice over the telephone, he answered gruffly.

"Now, don't be nasty, Oscar," ordered Evelyn imperiously. "I'm doing the best I can. I'm in a booth talking, and if you'll meet me at seven, we'll go together to Polly Hopkins. Does that suit you all right?"

"You don't suit me very well," Oscar grumbled into the receiver. "I'd like to give you the licking of your life, my lady."

Evelyn's laugh came ringing across the wire.

"Don't put yourself out, my dear man," she taunted. "Now, don't start bullying me over the phone, Oscar, for I won't stand it. Hold your temper if you can possibly do so. For once do as I tell you! Will you?"

"Oh, I suppose so," Bennett rapped out. "Where'll I meet you?"

"Well, let me see. At seven on the boulevard, near the lane."

"All right!" and Oscar slammed up the receiver without waiting to hear any more, and proceeded about his own business, with thoughts of anger toward Evelyn, how she could tease and condescend to him, and how he would get even when Polly would belong to him.

his to love or abuse at his own sweet will, for Oscar had little doubt that the squatter girl would eventually yield to his will.

Pollyop, meanwhile, quite unconscious of Oscar's vicious intentions, was already utterly overwhelmed with misery.

After the meager supper was over that night, she sat crouched near the wood-box, her arm around Billy Hopkins' stringy neck. Granny Hope was in bed and Wee Jerry, having cried himself to sleep, was in Jeremiah's room, rolled up in a blanket.

For the first time in her life Polly had seen her father weep. How impetuously she had kissed away his tears! How she had hung to his neck! When they had been forced to leave him, Jerry had shrieked his misery all the way through the streets of Ithaca.

To make the matter worse, it began to rain, to thunder and lighten. And now, a forlorn, lonely little creature, she sat listening to the tempest outside with no company but the billy goat.

How listless and hopeless she felt! Only when the thunder rolled over the lake, and the lightning flashed across the sky, did she lift her head. When she was happy, Polly loved the storms, but now, with Daddy in Auburn, how could she bear the thrashing rain and the moan of the willow trees as they swung to and fro over the shanty roof?

She found herself wishing fearfully that the storm would sweep off to the south and down behind the hills. Over and over in her mind went the thought that perhaps she could have helped



In the White Light of It Polly Saw a Man Lying Face Down in the Path Leading to the Shanty.

Daddy if she had done what Evelyn wanted her to. Why hadn't she consented to marry Oscar two weeks ago? She knew why, and, blushing, blamed herself. She could not keep the image of Robert Percival from smiling at her.

All of a sudden a frightful flash of lightning made dim the flicker from the small candle, and was followed instantly by a thunderous roar that shook the very earth. Mingled with it came a woman's scream. Polly struggled to her feet. Some one was in trouble! Some squatter-woman was calling her. She dashed toward the door just as it flung wide open, and Evelyn Robertson rushed in.

"Polly Hopkins," she cried, grasping the squatter girl's arm, "Pollyop, something struck Oscar, and he's dead in the road."

Practically she drew the dazed Polly over the threshold. The darkness was dense, and the torrents of rain pelted their faces. Another glaring streak of fire ran across the sky, making a vivid picture as it blazed Cornell university into plain view. In the white light of it, Polly saw a man lying face down in the path leading to the shanty. He made no effort to get up as the two girls bent over him.

"Mebbe he ain't dead," muttered Polly, shuddering. "Let's lug him in the hut."

Between them they dragged the heavy, inert body into the shanty and shut the door. Oscar looked dead when they turned him over. His face was livid, and his eyes tightly shut.

"The thunder hit him, huh?" questioned Polly, awestruck.

Shudder after shudder ran over Evelyn.

"I don't know," she moaned. "Yes, I suppose so. Oh, it was dreadful!" She began to cry, wringing her hands desperately.

"Don't do that," begged Pollyop, with a shiver. "Come on an' help me get 'im up on my bunk."

Weak from the shock, Evelyn was of little service in lifting Oscar. But the bed was low, and finally after much tugging, he was rolled lifelessly over on his back, stretched to his full length on the rickety cot.

Standing side by side, the girls looked anxiously down upon him.

"I guess mebbe he's dead, ain't he?" queried Polly woefully.

"Thus did the storm country give back to Evelyn Robertson her freedom."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The prince of Wales is exempted from income tax, but his brothers are not.

Highest Climb Above Snowline



Mount McKinley, the Top of the North American Continent.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

The completion of the government's Alaskan railway makes reasonably accessible for the first time the Mount McKinley National park which contains the highest point on the North American continent. The total area of this great playground which hitherto has been seen by so few people, is about 2,400 square miles.

In scenic grandeur the stupendous mass of which Mount McKinley is the culminating peak has no rival. The snow-line here lies at about 7,000 feet, and above that elevation only a few sharp crags and seemingly perpendicular cliffs are free from the glistening white mantle. From the valley of McKinley Fork, which is at the north base of the mountain and lies at an elevation of only 1,500 feet, the bare rocks of the lower mountains extend upward for about 5,500 feet, and above them Mount McKinley rises in majestic whiteness to a height of 20,500 feet—the loftiest peak on the continent.

The upper 18,000 feet of the mountain is clad in glaciers and perpetual snows, thus offering to the mountaineer the highest climb above snow-line in the world. The rise of 18,000 feet from the lower end of Peters Glacier, north of the mountain, to the highest peak is made in a distance of only 13 miles. In no other mountain mass do we find so great a vertical ascent in so short a distance. The peaks of the Colorado Rockies, though wonderful, rise from a high plateau, so that at most points from which they can be seen they stand only 7,000 or, at most 8,000 feet above the observer. Mount St. Elias, an 18,000-foot mountain, may be seen from sea level, but the peak stands 35 miles from the coast, and so loses in height to the eye by the distance from which it must be viewed.

Similarly the high volcanic peaks of Mexico and South America and the world's loftiest mountains in the Himalayas rise from high plateaus, which diminish by their own elevation the visible magnitude and towering height of their culminating peaks.

Southwest of Mount McKinley, 15 miles away from it, stands Mount Foraker, only 3,900 feet lower and almost equally imposing. If it stood alone, Mount Foraker would be famous in its own right as a mighty peak, having few equals; but in the presence of its giant neighbor it is reduced to secondary rank.

These two dominating peaks, standing side by side and known to the interior natives as Denali and Denali's Wife, far outrank the flanking mountains to the northeast and southwest, among which, however, there are a score of other peaks that rise to heights between 7,000 and 14,000 feet, well above snow-line, and that are the gathering ground for many glaciers.

In 1902 the first surveying party that actually reached the vicinity of Mount McKinley was conducted by Alfred H. Brooks and D. L. Haeberlin of the geological survey. This party entered the park at its southwest border and traversed it from end to end, bringing out the first authentic information in regard to an unexplored area of many thousand square miles and determining the position, height and best route of approach to the base of Mount McKinley.

Swarm With White Bighorn Sheep. The mountains at the head of Toklat and Teklanika rivers literally swarm with the magnificent white bighorn sheep, which are elsewhere extremely wary and difficult to approach, but which in summer are here so little disturbed that they move off only when one comes to close range. A day's travel along one of these valleys will usually afford the casual traveler a view of many bands of sheep. The sheep range on the lower slopes of the mountains, especially in the upper reaches of the streams, near the glaciers at the valley heads, or even in the valley bottoms.

The bighorn sheep prefers the slopes of high, rough mountains for its range, and may be found only in the mountains, within easy reach of rugged crags, to which it may retreat for safety from its enemies. Its range, therefore, lies between timber-line and the level of perpetual snow. It is difficult to make an accurate estimate of the number of sheep within

the new park, but there are probably well over 5,000.

Great herds of caribou or wild reindeer are to be seen—as many as 1,500 at once. Most of these herds frequent the bare gravel bars, where the strong winds afford some relief from the attacks of flies and mosquitoes. Other herds range of the high rugged mountain ridges, and several large droves have been observed far up on the glaciers, well toward snow-line, seeking a little respite from insect pests.

In other parts of Alaska caribou at times appear in huge droves as they migrate from place to place, but they stay only a short time in any one locality. In the Toklat basin and in the vicinity of Muldrow glacier, however, the caribou are at home, and they remain there throughout the summer to rear their young.

There is abundant indication that this is a permanent range. Deeply worn trails form a veritable labyrinth along the stream flats, and bedding grounds, old and new, occur everywhere. The miners from the Khatanga report that caribou may always be seen in great numbers on this range.

There is a striking difference between the actions of caribou and those of the bighorn sheep when surprised by man. A sheep, once aroused, knows exactly where he wants to go, and usually starts, without a moment's hesitation, on the shortest route to some rugged mountain mass. He may stop to look around and appraise the danger, but he is sure to follow the route he first chose.

Moose Are Plentiful.

Moose are very plentiful in certain parts of the new park, but are not so commonly seen as sheep and caribou. As their food supply consists of willow and birch twigs and leaves and the succulent roots of water plants, they stay much of the time in the wooded and brushy areas, where they are inconspicuous.

The best moose country in this region lies in the lowlands north of the main Alaska range, outside of the boundaries of the proposed park; but some moose are to be seen within the park lines, and doubtless some of them will take refuge in this game preserve when they are more vigorously hunted in the neighboring regions.

There are some black, brown and grizzly bears in this district, but the bear hunter has a much better chance of obtaining a hide in other parts of Alaska than he has here.

The new park lies almost entirely above timber-line. Trees grow along the valleys of the main streams to an elevation of about 3,000 feet above the sea-level, but the timbered area comprise only a small fraction of the whole. The only trees of importance are the spruce, birch and cottonwood, and none of these are large. The patches of trees afford logs for making log cabins, but there is no merchantable timber in the park. Willow brush and some alders grow somewhat farther up the valleys than the trees and enable the camper to find fuel for his fire in some areas where trees are lacking.

The completion of the new government railroad makes the park immediately accessible. The railroad runs within a few miles of the park line. On leaving Seattle one may then plan to reach Seward or Anchorage within a week, spend a stage on the railroad to the park station, and in another day or two, by rail or horse, penetrate well into the park and into the midst of its game lands.

With a completed wagon road leading from the railway, it should be an easy half day's journey of 90 miles by automobile from the railroad to the center of the park, the whole route traversing mountains of wonderful beauty and teeming with big game. At the western terminus of the road on road there will some day be a hotel for the accommodation of tourists and mountain climbers. There, below the terminus of Muldrow glacier, in constant view of the mighty snow-capped monarchs to the south, one will be able to find complete rest in the greatest of natural surroundings, or have a close at hand tasks of mountaineering that will tax the resources of the sturdiest. Few regions offer inducements to the mountaineer that can be found here.